

How to Get on the Internet and the World Wide Web

Network 2 Website
www.va.gov/visns/visn02



You'll need three things to get hooked up to the Internet—

- 1 Internet-ready Computer.** Any new computer purchased today will have a modem and software to enable you to connect to the Internet. If you're looking for a used computer, most from within the past three years will have enough power to get online, but you may need to add software or updated components.
- 2 Internet Service Provider.** An "ISP" provides the service that allows your computer to connect to the Internet. Most people connect using their computer's modem and residential telephone lines for about \$20 per month. Faster cable and DSL (digital subscriber line) connections which don't tie up your phone line are available for about \$40 per month, plus installation.
- 3 Experienced Friends.** If you are new to computers or the Internet, find friends who can offer advice on an ISP, or how to solve problems. Once everything is set up and you have the connection process mastered, accessing the myriad resources of the Internet is truly rewarding.

Browsers for Beginners

A **browser** is software on your computer to access the Internet. Popular browsers include Microsoft Internet Explorer and Netscape Communicator. Frequently-used commands for navigating the Internet are accessed in rows of buttons along top of the browser window.



Back takes a user to the previous screen displayed.



Forward returns to the previously displayed page if a user has clicked "Back."



Stop halts the loading of a slow or lengthy Web page.



Refresh updates the contents of the current Web page with the most recent data



Home displays a user-defined starting Web page. See *Customize Your Home Page* at right.

The Joy of Hyperlinks

Hyperlinks are connections to other Web pages—and are the best thing about the World Wide Web. Hyperlinks will appear in a Web page as text which is a different color and underlined, or they can be in the form of buttons you click.

TIP Many users double-click hyperlinks—you only need to click them once.

Why is it taking so long?

Most new users notice a lag between clicking a hyperlink and getting to the new Web page. Here are some cues to tell you the browser *is* in fact loading your Web page, and not ignoring you—

- The browser icon in the top right corner of the screen is animated.
- The mouse pointer displays an hourglass, watch hand, or spinning beach ball.

TIP Top Internet speeds come when fewer people are online. Try early mornings, late evenings, and weekends.

Definitions

Internet—A worldwide network of computers. The Internet enables the World Wide Web, electronic mail, newsgroups, and multimedia data.

Server—A server is another computer your computer requests data from. When you visit a Web site, your computer requests a Web page document from a server.

URL—Universal Resource Locator is the address of a page on the Web.

World Wide Web—Allows text, graphics, and multimedia to be transferred over the Internet on another computer using a browser.

Customize Your Home Page

- For Internet Explorer 5 go to the menu **Tools > Internet Options...**
- For Internet Explorer 4 go to **View > Internet Options...**
- For Netscape Navigator go to **Edit > Preferences...** and choose **Home Page**.